

30. *DATURA FEROX* LINN., A NEW RECORD FOR INDIA

(With five text-figures)

The genus *Datura* Linn. (Solanaceae) with nearly 10 annual species is represented in India by only 3 species. Recently a species of *Datura* was collected which could neither be matched with any known species in India and nor could it be matched with any of the collections found in Indian Herbaria. It has, however, been identified to be *Datura ferox* Linn., which is a native of the warmer regions of China, but is believed to have been introduced at an early date in Spain and Sicily (Safford 1921). Very recently, however, it is reported to have spread widely throughout the warm regions of the world. It is now being recorded for the first time from India where it seems to be a recent migrant.

To facilitate the identification and study of the plant, a detailed description with drawings, is provided.

***Datura ferox*** Linn. Amoen. Acad. 3: 403. 1756; Haegi, Aust. J. Bot. 24: 415-35. 1976. (Figs. 1-5).

A 0.5—1 m tall, annual herb; branches stout, hairy, green or purplish towards the base. Leaves 10-15 × 7—12 cm, broadly ovate to rounded—triangular, margins coarsely double lobed, irregular; base oblique, often shortly decurrent on the petiole, obtuse to truncate, apex acute or acuminate; petiole 2.5—8 cm long, sparsely hairy. Flowers white,

solitary; peduncle 0.5—1.5 cm long. Calyx 2.5—3 cm long, angular, narrowed towards the summit with 5 prominent longitudinal ribs; lobes 5, 4-7 mm long, tomentose inside. Corolla 4.5—6 cm long, white, throat and limb often slightly plicate; lobes 5, very short, broadly triangular; acumens 0.1—0.2 cm long. Stamens 5, adnate to the corolla, 1.5 cm from the base; anthers 3-4 mm long, white. Style 3 cm long; stigma 1-2 mm across. Capsule erect, ellipsoid to broadly ellipsoid, rarely subglobose, 2-4 cm long, 2-3 cm broad, beset with 40-60 stout, sharp, conical spines; spines longer near the capsule summit, 15-25 mm long, minutely tomentose; dehiscence through 4 entire valves when ripe; peduncle stout. Persistent calyx base 0.4-0.8 cm long, more or less cylindrical, margin crenate to dentate. Seeds D-shaped, 0.4-0.5 cm long, thickened and rounded towards the upper outer margin, black, finely reticulate—foveate; hilum triangular.

A weed of cultivation or waste places along roads.

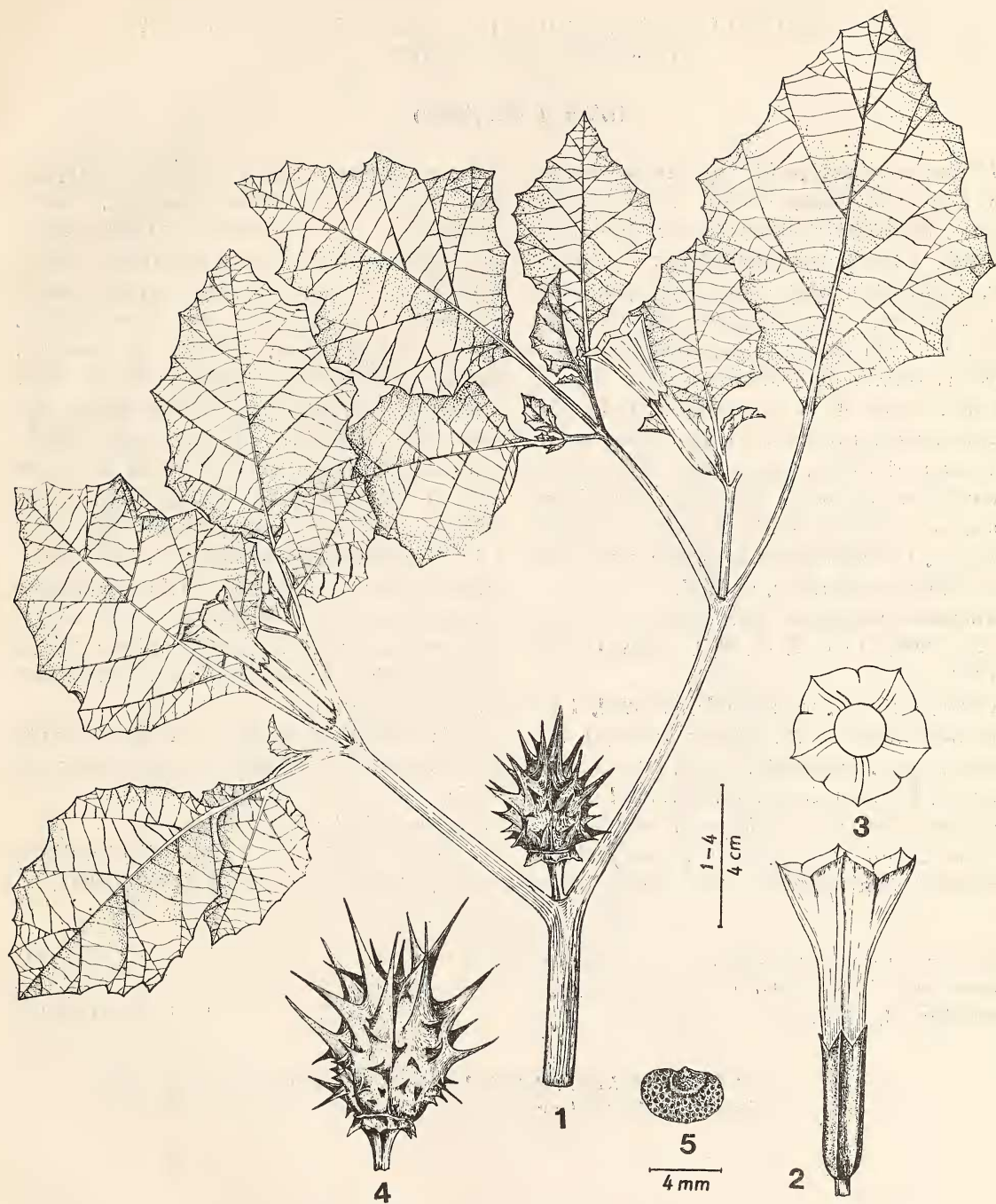
*Fls. & Frs.*: September-December.

*Herbarium specimens*: Bhandari 2219; Jodhpur, on way to Sardarsamand, October 1976.

*Distribution*: A native of the warmer regions of China, now distributed widely throughout the warm regions of the world.

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Figs. 1-5. *Datura ferox* Linn. 1. Branch with flowers and fruit; 2. Flower; 3. Corolla from above; 4. Fruit; 5. Seed.